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Montana has played the toughies

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MONTANA HAS
PLAYED THE TOUGHIES

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The University of Montana Grizzlies have played six basketball games this season,

lost five and won one.

Statistics show that the one team Montana defeated, Eastern Washington State College, has dropped below the 500 mark in the win-loss column, but the Savage team is the only squad the Tips have played that show more losses than wins. EWSC has a 3-5 marking.

Collectively, the five teams that beat the Grizzlies have chalked up 35 wins against 14 defeats which percentage wise totals 71.4 out of a possible one hundred.

A game by game break-down of the teams that beat Montana shows Denver University, Montana's first downfall, barely ahead of the 500 mark supporting a 5-4 record. The Pioneers beat the Tips, 96-58, and are currently the eighth best defensive team in the nation.

Denver's schedule has not been the easiest either. Stan Albeck's team has played and defeated Utah and Brigham Young, only to lose to Wyoming, Colorado State and New Mexico. These five have been or are basketball powers in the West.

After Denver, Montana traveled to Colorado State for loss number two. Currently Jim William's Rams are 5-2 for the season and play one of the toughest schedules in the country. After beating the Grizzlies in the opener, 100-77, CSU knocked off North Texas State, San Jose State, Denver and Air Force. The three defeats for the NCAA 1968 finalist came in games against Missouri and the University of Pacific.

Against Montana the Rams out rebounded the Tips 59 to 41 and beat the Grizzlies by 23. One man made the difference for Colorado in Ft. Collins and Mike Childress, the 6-10 number two rebounder in the nation, was the margin. He collected 24 rebounds and pumped in 27 points against Montana.

After the Colorado trip, the Tips headed west to take on Oregon and Washington State. After dropping the first two games to Wichita State and Florida State, the Duck have come on strong to take seven in a row. Oregon edged the Grizzlies 92-81. Other UO victims include Michigan State, and top rated Washington and Washington State.

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Washington State took the Grizzlies, 106-77, and beat eight other top foe including Colorado, ranked in the AP and UPI top twenty, Hawaii, Illinois and Oregon State. The only losses for the 9-2 Cougars were to New Mexico and Oregon.

The latest trouble for the Tips was Utah, a team that defeated the Montana visitors, 109-93. The Redskins rank eighth in the nation's rebounding and 16th in national scoring. Utah supports a 9-3 record only losing to Denver, Utah State, in the AP and UPI top twenty, and California. Jack Gardner's crew has defeated Michigan State, Stanford, Michigan, San Francisco State, Loyola of Los Angeles, San Jose State and California.

"As you can see," Montana coach Bob Cope said, "the West has basketball power this year and we've played some of the tops. The kids aren't discouraged with the record. We know the competition has been rough and that the Big Sky title is the Grizzly objective," he said.

"We feel with this experience behind us, we can do well in the conference," Cope said, "but we have to start by knocking off Boise State." That will not be easy as the Broncs have run up a 9-3 record and defeated Eastern Montana Wednesday, 100-85.

Montana plays Boise State Saturday night at 8 p.m. in the Adams Field House.

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